



Catholic historian Christopher H. Dawson of Harvard Divinity School:

"In some ways, the time is ripe for reunion. The Eastern Church is headquartered outside the Communist world, but the vast majority of its adherents are behind the Iron Curtain. It is a head without a body."



Episcopal Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill, a president of the World Council of Churches:

"I can't believe that Christ . . . wanted to establish 250 sects. In the mind of God, there must be one church."

hurts and nationalistic differences. They are open to changes in certain venerated customs and practices. For example, the celibacy of the Catholic clergy can be modified. Recently, in fact, a few married priests have been admitted to the Latin rite of the Roman Church.

There have been semiprivate conversations between Catholics and Protestants, with the knowledge of Catholic authorities. And in February, Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Americas and an official of the World Council of Churches, who likes to holiday in Rome, actually visited the Pope; this was the first such meeting in 350 years.

As the great churches come to know each other better, their mutual sympathy grows, and generally they find each other more flexible than expected. Dr. Karl Barth, an outstanding exponent of Protestant theology, told a LOOK reporter in Geneva that he has very good relations with Catholics on a personal basis.

"The serious Roman Catholics," he said, "are freer in discussion than some Protestants. I remember a talk I had once with a Dominican. He held up one hand with his fingers outstretched and then—pointing with his other hand to each finger, one by one—he chanted, 'The Pope forbids me this, the Pope asks me to do that, the Pope frowns on this, the Pope says this, the Pope says that!' And when he finished, he smiled at me and poked a finger through the gaps between the fingers of his outstretched hand."

Are there any working demonstrations of contrasting faiths getting together?

In southern India, where Christians are very much a minority, most of the Protestant churches have already united—and this includes the Anglicans, who, like the Roman Catholics, have an ordained priesthood and claim the historic succession of bishops from early-church times. A uniform church service has been created, but individual churches are free to make changes in it if they wish. (A similar merger of Protestant churches is planned in northern India, Ceylon and Pakistan.)

Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike of San Francisco attended a celebration of the new liturgy while at the Anglican conference at Lambeth, England. "I think it's the most beautiful and meaningful ever developed," he told LOOK. "There was no sense of loss whatsoever, but a gain all around."

CHRISTIANITY

Roman Catholics

Historic Catholics

Eastern Orthodox 1054

THE REFORMATION

Anglicans 1534

Lutherans 1517

Calvinists 1536

English Protestants

Reformed Churches

Puritans

Separatists

Presbyterians

Pilgrims

Quakers

Baptists

This chart shows the origins of the major elements of Christianity from the division of Catholicism into Roman and Eastern branches.

Congregationalists

Episcopalians

Unitarians

Methodists

In our lifetime, will Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants kneel together in one church?

Probably not. The human and organizational difficulties seem too great. The doctrine of papal infallibility, a very real obstacle to reunion, could hardly be vetoed by an infallible Pope. Still, as pointed out by Dr. Schmemmann, "the tempo of the world is changing. What once took years now takes weeks or months. We must very quickly go back through the centuries, take up all our problems and misunderstandings and solve them in the spirit of Christian charity. I shall not expect the Catholics to say they were wrong on anything, but maybe they'll say they used the wrong words. I know reunion looks impossible from here, but we must take the text of Matthew 19:26: *But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'* We should take that text and stop looking for ulterior motives in one another. Let us accept the purest motives and really work and pray for one church."

Several of those interviewed suggested a "nonorganizational" solution to unity. Dr. Barth said, "If we want to get out of this dead end, we must look back to the origins of the Church. We must all become disciples. Let us start there and leave aside the discussions of dogma, hierarchy and so on. These matters are important, too, but we cannot *begin* with them." Bishop Sherrill said, "I don't think reunification will be brought about by a group of church administrators and theologians. Someday, though, there will be a miracle comparable to Whitsunday. It will represent God overruling the prejudices and misunderstandings that have grown up over the past 1,500 years."

Aside from a miracle what can churchgoers hope for?

At best, the Pope's council and the continuing work of the World Council of Churches will help clear the air of past bitterness. Members of various faiths will better understand each other's positions. Protestant churches will continue to merge. All churches will co-operate more closely as a single force against the growing menace of materialism. Most significantly, a spirit of Christian charity will grow between members of different faiths. The tensions between neighbors who belong to different churches will be reduced. And while these neighbors probably will not kneel together in the same church, they have good reason to hope that their children will.

END